


Workshop on  
The future environmental labelling of seafood  
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*Notes on*  
*The Certification of Well Managed Fisheries*



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# An International Program

- Certification and ecolabelling following the 2005/2009 FAO Guidelines is an international cooperative program.
- Basis is official contributions within the international community.
- Intended to promote conservation and sustainable use.

# Certification and “ecolabelling”

- Certification and “ecolabelling” following the FAO Guidelines is in important ways different from other kinds of ecolabelling; e.g.:
  1. Certification of government performance in fisheries management ;
  2. Defined and circumscribed scope.

Perhaps we should not call it “ecolabelling”?

Probably too late to change that now!



## Icelandic project

- Icelandic fisheries stakeholders have decided, with the support of the government, to request third party certification by
  - an independent, internationally recognised, accredited certification body to confirm that Iceland pursues responsible fisheries.
- The certification body will assess fishery conformance to a specification based on the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) 2005 Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries – as extended in 2009.
- According to plans, the certification of the first stocks should be completed in 2010.



## THE ICELANDIC PROJECT ON DOCUMENTING AND COMMUNICATING RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

- The project is carried out on behalf of the Icelandic fisheries sector.
- The venue is The Fisheries Association of Iceland
  - Project direction is provided by a dedicated project group;
    - also, technical committee with participation from public institutions.
  - Supported by a grant from the Icelandic AVS Fisheries Research Fund.
  - The project is on a cost basis, *i.e.* not for profit.
  - Support and participation from public authorities.



# THE TASK

- To meet demand of seafood buyers for documentation showing that Icelanders are engaged in responsible fisheries.
- The demand concerns well managed fisheries, *i.e.* that the product is not obtained through overfishing.
- This demand must be met on the basis of commitments made through national law and international agreements.
- Certification and logos are among the ***many tools*** that can be used to provide information on responsible fisheries to buyers and other interested parties in our export markets.

# The Scope of Certification:

## ***Life, the Universe and Everything?***

Possibly, but not if following the FAO Guidelines (2005/2009):

“SCOPE 1. These guidelines are applicable to ecolabelling schemes that are designed to certify and promote labels for products from well-managed marine capture fisheries and focus on issues related to the sustainable use of fisheries resources”

**Therefore: If following FAO Guidelines, then must address *effective fisheries management* in a serious manner**

# Limits to Scope (FAO Guidelines, Article 63)

- Validation of standards
- 63. In developing and revising standards, an appropriate procedure should be put in place to validate the standard vis-à-vis the minimum requirements for sustainable marine fisheries as laid out in these guidelines.
- Validation is also required to ensure that standards do not encompass criteria or requirements that are of no relevance for sustainable fisheries and could cause unnecessary barriers of trade or mislead the consumer.



- The Scope of Certification under the FAO Guidelines is thus clearly defined and circumscribed.
- Does not preclude certification from addressing other issues under other schemes
  - in particular those issues that can be more directly addressed locally or by individual seafood companies or groups rather than through governmental management.

This should *inter alia* be understood with reference to the Guidelines' Principles:

# Principles

- Principles for ecolabelling schemes underpin the international program – defined at the outset at the 1998 FAO Technical Consultation and contained in the 2005 FAO Guidelines; these include (from Art. 2):
  - Be of a voluntary nature and market-driven.
  - Be non-discriminatory, do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade and allow for fair trade and competition. [Consistent with the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.]
  - Provide the opportunity to enter international markets.
  - Be considered equivalent if consistent with these guidelines.
- Note: Defined scope and equivalence are linked

# CONTENTS OF THE SPECIFICATION FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES



- The product is derived from a specified fish stock; that stock is harvested responsibly.
- This entails:
  - Decisions on total catch (TAC) from the stock are based on scientific advice with the objective of responsible, sustainable harvesting;
  - Decisions on total catch are implemented in a specified manner;
  - Effects of the fishery on the ecosystem are minimised by application of a specified approach;
  - The product is in fact derived from catch from the stock in question;
    - Certification of traceability / "Chain of Custody" according to a specific standard.

# Content and developments

- The Icelandic scheme will remain consistent with the FAO Guidelines regarding scope.
- A technical committee will operate to ensure that the standard is always up-to-date.

## Involvement of states:

Fisheries management (FAO Guidelines, Article 5)

5. Bearing in mind that ecolabelling schemes relate to fisheries management, and rights and duties of States\*, it is recognized that the involvement of States in ecolabelling schemes is desirable and should be encouraged ...

\*In these Guidelines, the reference to States includes the European Community in matters within its competence

# Options for governance structures

## (FAO Guidelines, Article 37)

- 37. There are various options for the governance of an ecolabelling scheme.
- The initiative for a scheme could be taken by a government, an intergovernmental organization, a non-governmental organization, or a private industry association.
- There are also various options for the geographical range of a scheme. It could be national, regional or international in scope.

# Credibility and Trust

- The principal benefit of certification is community **consensus** for better discipline in *fisheries management*.
- The desirable units for certification are thus the same as for *fisheries management*:
  - The *unit stock* (or stocks) and the community harvesting that stock.

# Legitimacy through FAO Guidelines

Ecolabelling schemes all claim legitimacy through consistency with the FAO Guidelines.

- Surely all operators in the seafood value chain wish to do the same.
- The Principles are an integral part of the FAO Guidelines.



# PROPER CERTIFICATION IS NOT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, FISHERIES ADVICE OR FISHERIES MANAGEMENT



- Certification is not marine research nor is it fisheries advice;
  - certification includes verification that research and fisheries advice is based on generally accepted methodology.
- Certification and ecolabelling is not fisheries management
  - fisheries management remains the task of the competent authorities.
- Certification entails, *i.a.*, third party verification of government fisheries management performance which facilitates market access for seafood.
  - Do authorities meet the commitments that they themselves have made in international fora?

# Common goal

- Manage fisheries to the FAO Guidelines' Requirements and Criteria.
- Certify to FAO Guidelines or document by other credible means.
- Respect Principles, including equivalence of schemes.

Thank you for your attention!